



QUESTIONS & ANSWER RELATED TO THE LORD'S SUPPER

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THE LORD'S SUPPER: Q & A

Is the Lord's Supper the same as the Passover?

No, it is not. The Passover was a Jewish feast that was, and is still, celebrated among the Jews to commemorate their deliverance from Egypt. It was instituted by Moses and was celebrated once in a year. The Lord's Supper, however, was instituted by Jesus and as the symbol of His Covenant with us. It can be observed as often as the Church of the Lord at a place comes together to remember Him and proclaim His death.

"...do this in remembrance of Me."

"This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1Cor.11:24,25,26)

Who can eat of the Lord's Supper?

Someone with the following qualifications:

1. One who is part of the believing community (the Church); i.e. someone who can "come together as a church" (1Cor.11:18).
2. One who can remember the Lord; i.e. who has a personal relationship with the Lord and has identified with His sacrificial death (1Cor.11:24).
3. One who can proclaim or testify of or speak and teach about the Lord's death; i.e. someone who understands the doctrine of atonement and knows that he is saved so that he speaks not from mental knowledge but from experiential understanding (1Cor.11:26)
4. One who can have and has reverence for the Lord's Table; so that he can eat in a reverent manner (1Cor.11:27).
5. One who is not an infant or of such age in which he doesn't know the difference between good and evil; one who can have a

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legally responsible status so that “guiltiness” and “justification” are terms applicable to him (1Cor.11:27).

6. One who has examined himself (1Cor.11:28).

7. One who can discern the Lord's body (1Cor.11:29).

Is baptism for the remission of sins necessary before one can partake of the Lord's Supper?

Yes, it is. For, without the baptism for the remission of sins one cannot be a disciple of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ ordained these two ordinances for the Church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. One cannot partake of the table and of the Body of the Lord unless one is first washed already.

Peter said to Him, “You shall never wash my feet!”

Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!” Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean...” (John 13:8-10)

An example of the sequence is given here:

- all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,
- all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. (1Cor 10:2-4)

Can children partake of the Lord's Supper?

If the child fulfills the above qualifications, is of discerning age, has reverence, and is baptized and living a worthy life of a believer.

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In response to those who contend that the children of believing parents are already part of the Covenant by birth, even as the Jewish children were part of the Covenant by birth, it must be said that

1. The Jewish children only become part of the Old Covenant through circumcision and not without it.
2. No one is saved or born again except through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience to the Faith. The analogy applies, A child born in a garage is not born a mechanic.

Where should the Lord's Supper be eaten?

1. Wherever the Church can come together in one place for fellowship **as a church** (1Cor.11:18,20).
2. It implies away from one's home, though it may be at a particular house that the church gathers (1Cor.11:22)
3. It implies (for the term "as a Church" is used) where the leadership (elders, deacons) is present.

Can it be eaten at one's own home apart from the general fellowship?

In exceptional cases, for example in a place where there are no Christians except only one family. However, where there is more than one believing family, the principle of "coming together" is binding and must not be neglected; because the Bread talks about the unity of the Body of Christ. No element of division or pretence of special approval from God is permitted in the Body of Christ (1Cor.11:18,19). One must learn to "wait" for the other (1Cor.11:21). All this implies that the Lord's Table is not something that is meant for personal home practice but is an

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ordinance for the believing community as a whole in one place. Therefore, the Bible says,

Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not! (1Cor.11:22)

The Lord's Table is the place where believers, whether they are rich or poor, come and have an equal share. It is the Lord's Table and is established for the believing community as a whole.

How often should the Lord's Supper be eaten?

As often as the Church can come together as a Church; and it is possible that the ordinance be observed.

In the New Testament times, the Church used to gather on the first day of the week (Sunday).

"Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..." (Acts 20:7; see also 1Cor.16:2 for Sunday gathering)

Is the Lord's Supper meant for healing of body?

With regard to healing, the Bible specifies that

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:14-16)

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If someone has sinned against the Lord's Table and so is sick due to the Lord's chastening, then he can call for the elders of the Church and confess and be prayed for.

But, nowhere does the Bible teach that the Lord's Supper is for healing of the body. It is only an ordinance in remembrance and proclamation of the death of our Lord for our sins. It is one thing if the Lord chooses to heal someone through his/her partaking of the table; but it is sinful to try to treat the sacred bread and wine like some kind of magical symbol to health and happiness. The Bible has only commanded prayer, confession of sins, anointing with oil, and laying on of hands for healing. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not for the purpose of physical healing, but because of one's identity with the Lord in His death and resurrection.

Is the Lord's Supper meant for salvation?

No, it is for those who are saved and sanctified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Does the bread become flesh and the wine become the blood of Jesus?

No, they are only symbols of His flesh and His blood. And, so, they must be treated as His flesh and His blood. Thus, though, physically, one is partaking of the bread and the wine, the communion is not physical but is spiritual and one is partaking of the Body of Christ, spiritually speaking.

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What do the bread and the wine signify?

The Bread signifies the Body of the Lord and the Wine signifies His Blood. They together signify the New Covenant that the Lord made with the Church,

A Covenant which He made by His sacrificial death on the cross.
A Covenant that forever blots out all sins and writs of the Law against us.

A Covenant that forever abolishes the old system of sacrifices and observances of the Old Covenant.

A Covenant that brings Eternal Life, and Eternal Inheritance in heaven.

A Covenant that breaks down all walls of barriers between the Jew and the Gentiles and brings all together to God in the one Body.

Can rice and tea be used instead of bread and wine?

No, Biblical symbols cannot be replaced.

Can Rice Bread (made from rice flour) be used instead of Wheat Bread?

The Bible doesn't specify what kind of grain should be used for making the bread. The Greek word *artos* usually was used for barley-bread which was the poor man's bread. I don't yet find any reason why rice bread cannot be used as long as the bread is a whole symbolizing unity of the body.

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Who is authorized to administer the Lord's Supper? Can anyone, any believer, administer that?

At the first Lord's Supper, it was Jesus who broke bread and gave it to the disciples.

In Acts 20:11 we read of Paul who broke bread on the first day of the week at Troas.

Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 11:23 implies that he used to break the bread among them: "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you.."

So, it is obvious that an elder appointed by the Lord as overseer of the local flock is supposed to lead the observance of the ordinance.

A glimpse into the Early Church practice of the Lord's Supper is obtained from Justin Martyr who lived between 103-165 AD; in his *First Apology*, he wrote:

Chap. LXV. – Administration of the Sacraments. But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized [illuminated] person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at

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considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language to γένοιτο [so be it]. And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

Chap. LXVI. — Of the Eucharist. And this food is called among us Εὐχαριστία [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, (Luke 22:19) this is My body;" and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood;" and gave it to them alone.